

After 1967 expose CIA sought new ties with campus, labor

By Crocker Snow Jr.
Globe Staff

The written report of a confidential discussion about Central Intelligence Agency operations held in 1968, a year after the public controversy over agency involvement with the National Student Assn., shows the CIA was anxious to establish new contacts with other student groups, foundations, universities, labor organizations and corporations for its overseas work.

The discussion was held in January 1968 among ranking government officials and former officials, including several former CIA officers, under the auspices of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Though no direct quotes are attributed in the report, the opinion was stated by the discussion leader, Richard M. Bissell Jr., formerly a deputy director of the CIA, that: "If the agency is to be effective, it will have to make use of private institutions on an expanding scale, though these relations which have 'blown' cannot be resurrected."

The discussion also referred to the continued utility of labor groups and American corporations to CIA operations. No such groups or corporations are named.

The written report, like others sponsored by the council, is considered by the participants as "confidential" and "completely off the record."

The document is being circulated by the Africa Research Group, a small, radically oriented organization headquartered in Cambridge, because "it offers a still-relevant primer on the theory and practice of CIA manipulations."

Portions of the document are scheduled to appear today in the "University Review," a New York-based monthly.

The document reflects individual assessments of the CIA by those present. The report includes a number of general statements:

—The two elements of CIA activity, "intelligence collection" and "covert action" (or "intervention") are not separated within the agency but are considered to "overlap and interact."

—The focus of classical espionage in Europe and other developed parts of the world had shifted "toward targets in the underdeveloped world."

—Due to the clear jurisdictional boundary between the CIA and FBI, the intelligence agency was "adverse to surveillance of US citizens overseas (even when specifically requested) and adverse to operating against targets in the United States, except for foreigners here as transients."

—The acquisition of a secret speech by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in February 1956 was a classic example of the political use of secretly acquired intelligence. The State Department released the text which, according to one participant, prompted "the beginning of the split in the Communist movement." Since this speech had been specifically targeted before acquired, the results meant to this participant that "if you get a precise target and go after it, you can change history."

—"Penetration," by establishing personal relationships with individuals rather than simply hiring them, was regarded as especially useful in the underdeveloped world. The statement is made that "covert intervention (in the underdeveloped world) is usually designed to operate on the internal power balance, often with a fairly short-term objective."

—The reconnaissance of

during the '50s provided "limited but dramatic results. Flights were late of the cancelled scheduled summit between President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev after Francis G. Powers was shot down in Laos." (The document also mentions the assassination of President Kennedy.)

"After five days of flights were from the Russian side, these operations highly secret in the States, and with no sound," reads the document. "These overflights 'leaked' to the press, the US has been forced to take action."

The meeting, was not to consider CIA missions so characteristic of concepts and procedures. Discussion was held of a council statement "Intelligence as Policy."

The chairman of the meeting was William D. Sullivan, an investment banker who had served in Washington as undersecretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury in the Kennedy Administration.

Twenty persons were listed as attending including prominent former officials and educators like Harry Howe Ransome of Vanderbilt University and David B. Truman, president of Mt. Holyoke College.

The list included Allen Dulles, former director of the CIA, and Robert Amory Jr., who had been deputy director, as well as Bissell, who had been deputy director until shortly after the Bay of Pigs invasion, in which the CIA was involved.

The discussion took place just a year after revelations by Ramparts Magazine concerning CIA-funded training of agents for South Vietnam at

The document includes the statement that "it is notably true of the subsidies to student, labor and cultural groups that have recently been publicized that the agency's objective was never to control their activities, only occasionally to point them in a particular direction, but primarily to enlarge them and render them more effective."

In an article in the Saturday Evening Post in May 1967, Thomas Braden, who had helped set up the subsidies with Dulles, defended the concept as a way to combat the seven major front organizations of the Communist world in which the Russians through the use of their international fronts had stolen the great words such as peace, justice and freedom."

The report shows that the publicity had not been as damaging to CIA activities as feared.